

## SCRIPTURE READING

JUNE 12, 2022

### Proverbs 8:1-4      The Gifts of Wisdom

*Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: 'To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.*

### Romans 5:1-5      Results of Justification

*Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

### John 16:12-15

*'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

## SERMON

JUNE 12, 2022

### LET US PRAY:

O God of Love, O God of Truth;  
Let us say strong things gently and gentle things strongly.  
Let us speak the truth in love to all and love the truth that lives in each.  
Let us hear the truth as we each need it and live that truth.  
O God, we heed it through Jesus; Your Word & our Lord. Amen.

## GOD'S GPS

For years before we moved to Vermont,  
we used to rent different vacation houses in Vermont and  
New York ski areas,

where I would sit for hours while my two children had skiing lessons.

I wanted them to learn to ski when they were young,  
since I always wanted to learn but didn't have the opportunity.

The kids just loved it

and I loved watching them and the other skiers.

One particular time stands vividly in my memory.

It was a cloudy day, crisp and cold and the air smelled of snow coming.

The cloudiness of the day, made the skiers clothing colors brighter

and as I searched for the familiar purple snowsuit on Cathy

and the bright yellow jacket on John,

I noticed on the slopes some people wearing bright red vests. Wondering  
whom they were,

went closer to the end of the slope

and as one skier approached with a red vest,

he shouted, to me—hey you red jacket,

blind skier coming your way—I was so busy

trying to read the words on the red vest,

I completely missed the skier coming straight for me.

I jumped to the side just in time,

and as the fellow in the red vest swirled round in front of me

and I read these words on the vest: **BLIND SKIER.**

I was astounded.

If you've ever just watched other people ski,

you know how hard it must be to ski with two good eyes,

much less with no eyesight at all.

I kept wondering

"How do they do it?"

I quickly said I was sorry and moved away

—embarrassed by my own ignorance but eager to learn more.

I walked over to the desk where I had signed up the kids for lessons

and asked one of the ski instructors, how a blind person could ski?

The answer was fascinating.

Each blind skier is given a guide.

That guide may ski beside, behind, or in front of the blind person

—but always in a place where they could communicate with each other.

The instructor told me that there are two basic forms of communication

this guide will use:

the tapping together of ski poles to assure the blind person  
that the guide was there;  
and the speaking of simple instructions about what to do next.  
The guide may say,

"Go right, turn left, stop, slow, skier coming up on your right." —OR  
**IN MY CASE WATCH OUT THERE IS LADY RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU!!!**

The only responsibility of the blind skier  
is to exhibit complete trust and immediate obedience  
to the instructions of the guide.

Life is much like skiing downhill totally blind.

We can't see even five seconds into the future.

We can't see the struggles and the heartaches  
that may await us.

We can't even see other "skiers" who might run into us.

But God has given us His children their own personal Guide.

This morning we heard in the Scripture reading Jesus say,

*"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."*

The word "guide" interestingly in the Greek language  
is a word that is used to describe someone

who guides a person who is blind.

It literally means "lead the way."

Lead the way

—made me also think about the wonderful technology of a GPS.

The Global Positioning System a network of about 30 satellites  
orbiting the Earth at an altitude of 12,500 miles.

The system originally developed by the US government for military navigation  
but now anyone with a GPS device,

mobile phone or handheld GPS unit,

can receive the radio signals that the satellites broadcast.

Wherever you are on the planet, at least four GPS satellites  
are 'visible' at any time.

Each one transmits information about its position  
and the current time at regular intervals.

These signals, traveling at the speed of light,  
are intercepted by your GPS receiver,

which calculates how far away each satellite

is based on how long it took for the messages to arrive.

Once it has information on how far away at least three satellites are,  
your GPS receiver can pinpoint your location

this gives rise to some pretty accurate information about where we are  
and where we are going.

Where are we going????

## **GPS - GOD'S PERFECT SETUP**

Today is known as Trinity Sunday, the Trinity is illogical,  
it's un-mathematical, so why don't we just straighten it out once and for all?

In order to even begin to understand the greatest mystery,  
one that many preachers will try to avoid

because the thought of Three Persons, One God is uncomprehensible  
to even the most scholarly theologians of history.

Aren't we just creating unnecessary confusion

by sticking with this poorly constructed math problem? .

The problem here is that Christianity is not an equation or a theorem:

Christianity is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

*"In the beginning,"* wrote John,

*"was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God,"*  
and the world said, "Wait, what?"

What do you mean the Word was with God

and the Word was God? Which is it?"

But rather than clarifying this doozy of an introduction,

John goes on to tell us that this very same Word of God

— the One who is both distinct from God and who is God

— took flesh as a tiny, helpless baby in middle-of-nowhere Nazareth.

## **GPS - GOD'S PROMOTION SERVICE**

**That God, Jesus, ----**

the Son, who was the loving friend of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus,

the Word of God himself died on a cross,

and in so doing, destroyed death itself.

And if that weren't complicated enough,

We also have to wrestle with today's Gospel

in which Christ speaks of the Holy Spirit.

## **GPS - GOD'S POWER SERVICE**

This is the life-breath of God, the active love of God,

and yet Jesus doesn't call the Spirit "it,"

as though speaking of an energy, an activity, or a force.

Instead, Jesus says of the Holy Spirit,

"He will guide you into all the truth."

This is the same Spirit of God

whom we see hovering over the waters of creation in Genesis,

transforming judges and prophets in the Old Testament,

The Spirit who, Paul tells us, can be grieved by our actions,

who speaks in the hearts of his faithful people,

teaching us to pray,

and coming alongside us as advocate and guide.

What do we make of all of this?

## GPS - GOD'S PROTECTION SERVICE

What do we make of the Father, the source of all that is, spoken of, not as a theory, about why there is something instead of nothing, **but as a person** who loves each of us infinitely, who grieves with us over our smallest worries, who numbers every hair upon our heads?

## GPS - GOD'S POSSIBILITY SYSTEM

What do we make of the Word of God, who is not an inspiring message or an important set of instructions, **but a person** who gives himself to us in his incarnation and gave his life for us on the Cross?

What do we make of the Holy Spirit, who is not the Star Wars force, or a warm fuzzy blanket, **but a person**, who takes up his home in our hearts; who offers to make our lives living signs of his goodness and love?

We are sometimes tempted to think of the Holy Trinity as a piece of technical theology, or the misguided math of a primitive age, **but in fact**, the belief in one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the living heart of our faith.

What impact does faith in the Trinity have on our lives?

Isn't it something we can reflect upon one Sunday a year and then safely shut back in the corner of our minds, where it belongs?

We often confuse knowing and knowing;

if I say to you, "You know Elon Musk, right?"

You'll say, "Of course, he's the richest man in the world!"

But if I then say,

"Can you text him and let him know that I won't make it for dinner tonight?"

You'll realize that I didn't mean,

"Do you know about him?"

**but, "Do you know him,**

do you have a relationship with him, are you pals?"

We sometimes imagine that the doctrine of the Trinity

is useful for knowing about God,

as though it were necessary to get the facts straight,

**but understating the Trinity**

it is the starting place for truly knowing Him.

To believe in abstract forces, explanatory hypotheses, or good or bad math problems, is to hold a set of opinions on the truth;

**but** to come into relationship with God, the Holy Spirit,

to feel him praying in your heart,

to feel him pulling you up into a life of ever-increasing selflessness and joy, this is to begin to build a real friendship with God.

To know the love of Jesus,  
fully God and fully human,  
to see how much God incarnate cares for you,  
to feel the living Word of God walking with you,  
helping you to transcend all that keeps you from living a life of love  
for God and neighbor,  
this is to begin to fall in love with God.

To worship our Heavenly Father,  
to know that we now stand,  
not as unimportant myriads of mortals,  
but as his beloved children,  
as offspring of His Heavenly Kingdom:  
as the beloved creatures to whom he gives all that he has,  
this is to truly know God.

I want to read to you a short story about true faith in the trinity  
...an Eastern Orthodox Bishop, Kallistos Ware  
tells an old Eastern European story about a bishop of a large diocese  
who decided to visit every single one of his parishes.

After spending years on horseback,  
he thought that he had seen them all,  
when someone told him about a tiny chapel,  
on a remote island in the sea.

Faithful to his mission,  
he chartered a boat and set out for the island.  
Upon landing, he found it to be a desolate spot,  
inhabited only by three old men.

He greeted them and began to question these isolated Christians  
about the orthodoxy of their faith.

“Tell me,” said the bishop, “how do you pray?”  
They replied, “We simply stand, holding hands like this.”  
And the three old men clasped their hands together,  
saying,

“You are three, we are three, have mercy upon us.”  
“What?” said the bishop. “This will never do. Don’t you know the Lord’s Prayer?”  
“No,” said the hermits, “Please teach us, O holy man of God!” The bishop spent  
all afternoon teaching the absent-minded old hermits the Lord’s Prayer, and  
when they had finally gotten it, he said his goodbyes, returned to the boat,  
and headed back out to sea, puzzling over these odd, old men and their island.  
It grew dark as he mused on the deck of his boat, looking out over the sea,  
when from far away he began to see a tiny point of light coming from the island.  
As it drew nearer, the light grew brighter and brighter, until he could see that it  
was the three hermits, holding hands, running swiftly on top of the water,

beards flying in the wind, their faces radiant with the light of Christ. "O holy man of God, holy man of God!" said the hermits, "We have forgotten the prayer you taught us! Please teach us again so that we may pray rightly!" "On second thought," said the bishop, "I think that your prayer must be fine."

As I conclude, let us celebrate our scholarship recipients this day, let us pray that they may feel our partnership with them, and as we send them off may they go forth to further their education, to gain knowledge and wisdom, may they remember that GPS might stand for Global Positioning System but it also stands for:

**GOD'S PERFECT SETUP**

**GOD'S PROMOTION SERVICE**

**GOD'S POWER SERVICE**

**GOD'S PROTECTION SERVICE**

**GOD'S POSSIBILITY SERVICE**

and that throughout their lives we pray that this important GPS translates to **GOD PROVIDES STRENGTH** to all his beloved. And as the holy monks prayed, You are three, we are three, have mercy upon us. To the holy and undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

## PRAYER OF PASTORAL CARE Trinity Sunday, June 12, 2022

Our response today is God, in your wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, your mystery is more than we can know or name, yet you call us into your life as Creator, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. We come before you in thanksgiving for the beauty of this season; for the lives of those who bless us beyond their knowing; and for opportunities to serve you by serving others.

We thank you, O God, for those in college and graduate school among us. May your Spirit of wisdom uphold and renew them in all their studies and living. God in your wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

We come before you for those we know who are suffering today because of illness in mind, body, or spirit. We pray healing and strength in every broken place of our lives. We long for the hope you alone can give—hope that does not disappoint us but rolls away stones of death and despair. God in your wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

We come before you earnestly and urgently for this world in tumult; for those who suffer in the natural world from drought and floods, tornadoes and wild fires; for all effects of climate change. May we be partners in the healing of earth and its oceans. We pray for the turmoil caused through war and violence, hatred and prejudice. Sustain victims, refugees and communities that we may work for a time when all peoples live together in safety and peace. God in your wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

May the forces for democracy and human rights be strengthened in our own land. As we revisit the Jan 6, 2020 insurrection at the Capitol, guide us as citizens and Congress (in *that we may make*) progress on voting protection and integrity, on gun safety, and on women's and all human rights. Root out of our hearts the seeds of bigotry and narrow-mindedness. God in your wisdom, **hear our prayer.**

We lift before you those on this church's immediate needs list.

O God of wisdom, may we delight in the world you have created. We offer our prayers and our lives as servants of your kingdom in Jesus' name. Amen.

### OFFERING

Out of God's life we have received the abundance of God's creation, God's word, and God's love. Let us return to God a portion of all that we have been given with joyous and glad abandon.

### \*DOXOLOGY

### \*PRAYER

Through these offerings, may your love spill over in glad abundance that brings relief, renewal, and hope to those in need. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.